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**The Department of Regulation and Licensing, on behalf of the Wisconsin Pharmacy
Examining Board, Announces a Patient Care Alert
-Hurricane Katrina Emergency Dispensing Policy-**

In response to the severe damage caused by Hurricane Katrina, the Wisconsin Pharmacy Examining Board has issued a patient care alert regarding emergency dispensing protocols to insure the continuation of patient care for persons relocating to Wisconsin from the Gulf States affected by the hurricane. As in past emergencies, the Board's position is that the need to continue patient care for the benefit of the patient's health, safety and welfare is of paramount importance where the usual and customary dispensing process has been disrupted by events beyond the patient's control.

The Emergency Dispensing Policy-

- 1. Applies to non controlled substances prescription drugs.**
- 2. Applies to controlled substances prescription drugs. (The DEA has agreed to this policy for controlled substances.)**
- 3. A pharmacist may dispense from information contained on a prescription label, to the extent reasonably necessary to meet patient need, and where in the judgment of the pharmacist the label represents a valid prescription order.**
- 4. Affected States- patients relocating from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama or Florida.**
- 5. This policy is to remain in effect until further notice from the Wisconsin Pharmacy Examining Board**

Persons affected who are relocating from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama or Florida, may be presenting to Wisconsin pharmacies for refills of prescription orders. It is possible that the only evidence of a valid prescription order in the patient's possession will likely be a prescription bottle with a label and nothing more.

The patient's doctor's office and pharmacy may be destroyed or damaged, and/or records or communications otherwise are unavailable at the current time. A transfer of prescription order information may not be possible.

The Board has taken the position in the past that dispensing in circumstances similar to these is

permissible, in order to meet patient need. The pharmacist is always under a duty to be observant for situations of improper drug seeking or diversion, however, where no indications exist to reasonably question prescription order validity, the pharmacist should work with the patient to continue care to the extent required until a patient may reasonably access records or establish continuing practitioner care in this state.

Each patient must be viewed on a case by case basis by the pharmacist to determine how best to meet patient need. Therefore, dispensing from a prescription drug label may be done for a limited and reasonable time. (The affected states are limited to patients from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida)

The United States Drug Enforcement Agency has reaffirmed its agreement to this policy for controlled substances dispensing. At the direction of the Chair of the Wisconsin Pharmacy Examining Board, this policy will be placed on the Board's agenda for its next meeting to be held on September 7, 2005, for further review in light of ongoing developments.

For more information on the emergency dispensing policy, please contact Larry J. Martin of the Department of Regulation and Licensing at 608-266-8608.